R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 015 064 RC 002 055

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND RURAL YOUTH.

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PUB DATE 23 OCT 67

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.40 8P.

DESCRIPTORS- ADULT EDUCATION, AGRICULTURE, BUSINESS, COLLEGES, *EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, EDUCATION, EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, GOVERNMENT (ADMINISTRATIVE BODY), INDUSTRY, MIGRANTS, *MIGRATION, PROGRAM COSTS, *RURAL POPULATION, RURAL YOUTH, *RURAL EDUCATION, SCHOOLS, SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION,

THE RURAL POPULATION IS RAPIDLY MOVING INTO THE CITIES IN SEARCH OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY, BUT MANY OF THESE RURAL MIGRANTS ARE UNABLE TO OBTAIN EMPLOYMENT DUE TO A LACK OF EDUCATION. TO COMBAT THIS SITUATION, SCHOOLS SHOULD OFFER MORE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. FOUR PREMISES THAT ARE VITAL FOR A SUCCESSFUL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ARE--(1) IT COSTS LESS TO TRAIN STUDENTS BEFORE THEY LEAVE SCHOOL, (2) SCHOOLS MUST DEVELOP PROGRAMS THAT WILL KEEP STUDENTS IN SCHOOL, (3) SCHOOLS MUST ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR HELPING STUDENTS MAKE THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO THE NEXT STEP IN LIFE, AND (4) SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES MUST BECOME MORE INVOLVED IN ADULT EDUCATION. IN ADDITION TO THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOLS, BUSINESS, INDUSTRY, AND GOVERNMENT SHOULD ENTER INTO FULL PARTNERSHIP WITH EDUCATION. FURTHER HELP CAN BE GIVEN TO RURAL YOUTH BY DEVELOPMENT OF A RURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM WITH EMPHASIS ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN RELATED FIELDS SHOULD ALSO BE MADE KNOWN TO STUDENTS. THE SPEECH CONCLUDES WITH SEVERAL QUOTES OF PRESIDENT JOHNSON PERTAINING TO THE IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE IN THE FUTURE OF OUR NATION. THIS SPEECH WAS PRESENTED AT THE NATIONAL OUTLOOK CONFERENCE ON RURAL YOUTH, OCTOBER 23-26, 1967, WASHINGTON, D. C., SPONSORED JOINTLY BY THE U. S. DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE, HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE, INTERIOR, AND LABOR, OEO, AND THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON YOUTH OPPORTUNITY. (JS)

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Special Session on Education
and Training of Rural Youth

Speech presented at
NATIONAL OUTLOOK CONFERENCE
ON RURAL YOUTH
October 23-26, 1967
Washington, D. C.

RECEIVED
DEC 18 1967
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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND RURAL YOUTH

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Nearly a hundred years ago, John Burroughs, the naturalist, observed that a nation starts rotting first in its great cities, was perhaps always rotting there, and has been saved only the the "antiseptic virtues of fresh supplies of country blood." Perhaps so.

But he also said --

> Paradoxical as it may seem, the city is older than the country... man made the city, and after he became sufficiently civilized, not afraid of solitude, and knew on what terms to live with nature, God promoted him to life in the country.

Here, he made a better point.

More and more our Nation needs one of its greatest assets--the uncrowded countryside--to help solve a problem that concerns us all.

Each year, nearly 600,000 people from our rural areas spill into the big cities, most of them fleeing from a land which no longer offers them a decent living.

Our farm population was 32,440,000 fifty years ago. Today it is 12,363,000, and destined to decline to 8 million by 1980. Since the early days of World War II, the farm population has declined from 30.5 million to 11.6 million.

Millions of the nonfarm population shifted to the cities.

Large numbers of Negroes have left, and are still leaving, the rural and small-town areas of the South in search of opportunity and a better life in the cities of the North. In the July 31 issue of the Washington Post, columnist Marquis Childs reported that between 1940 and 1960 some 3 million Negroes moved from the South.

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As Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman and other government officials have noted, 70 percent of our population is now crowded into one percent of America's land.

Many rural and small-town areas scattered over the remaining 99 percent of this land have only a sprinkling of people--populations too small to support the businesses, educational and civic institutions, and social and medical services essential for a productive and meaningful life.

These areas cannot attract outside industry to fill in the gap left by the dwindle of local job opportunities, because the reamining labor force is inadequately prepared in skills and in education.

The rural exodus has uprooted a disproportionately large number of young people who, by choice or ncesssity, flock to the cities.

It has drained off many bright youngsters who could provide leadership and boost the economy in their communities. In Galena, Illinois, for example, a local community leader recently established that just 7 of the more than 1,000 high school graduates who went to college returned to their community to live.

In the cities, on the other hand, the pile-up of ill-equipped, displaced youngsters from the countryside have mushroomed problems of assimilation, education, unemployment, welfare, racial tensions, juvenile delinquency and crime. The congestion coupled with despair and disillusionment, as we know, takes its toll in rioting and violence.

Most efforts to find jobs for rural youth who settle in the cities have proved unsuccessful. The one generalization that is usually applicable is that they lack the training needed to get and hold jobs.

Rural Americans lack job opportunities. Of the nearly 14 million new jobs created in our country in the past 15 years, few were for the rural areas. Yet surveys show that half our population would like to live and work in rural communities.

For the well-being of the entire Nation, urban and rural alike, we will have to bend our efforts to provide rural Americans with job resources along with other opportunities--opportunities.

for learning and earning,
for good living,
for growing, and
for becoming productive citizens in whatever environment they find themselves.

Unless these opportunities are provided for the richest resources of rural communities, the youth, we will fail to solve the problems of our cities.

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Concern for the future of young people is usually concentrated on the problems of urban youth. There is a tendancy to lose sight of or neglect the special problems and aspirations of rural youth. These may, in fact, be less visible and dramatic than those of out-of-school, unemployed youngsters in the city slums. But the problems are equally as great and tragic, and, for society, as wasteful in human resources.

Any realistic discussion of today's young people--their problems, needs, aspirations, and their prospects--begins by focusing on educational attainment. Why? Because education IS the link between the individual and society--in this world, at this time. Education provides the ladder to occupational, economic and social achievement.

Almost inevitably the discussion must then turn to opportunities and preparation for employment.

We have reached a time when the question of occupational education has come into the same perspective as general education. The individual does not have an education unless he has occupational skills, because in many ways an individual's role in society is as a worker. It is more important to his basic psychological development to give him a part to play--than to give him an income.

No system of public school education will be pronounced complete until all youth are given a knowledge of the occupations which support the economic structure of their society, and a chance to make decisions about their future contributions to that structure. And no educational system will be said to be universal in its opportunities until all youngsters can receive the same care and attention given those who are bound for college.

This modern-day educational philosophy reaffirms the principle of universal education expressed by Thomas Jefferson --

> To provide an education adapted to the years, the capacity, and the condition of everyone, and directed to their freedom and happiness.

What role can vocational education play in shaping the future of rural youngsters?

The Bureau of Adult, Vocational, and Library Programs in the Office of Education has programs that I believe are really on the cutting edge of education in this country. We have the responsibility--and we have the know-how--to convert an unemployable adolescent into a productive adult; a liability into an asset. But here are some basic premises that will need to be accepted in order to improve job training opportunities and to understand some of the related problems:

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First, we must assume that in the long run it will cost less to have programs in our schools aimed at developing and preventing problems in individuals than to have programs based on the concept of correction and remediation after the individual has dropped out of school. This country is going to have to invest a great deal more in development and prevention, as contrasted with remediation and correction.

Second, the school is the one institution in which all of our young people come together in one way or another at one time or another. Nowhere else can we really focus our resources so effectively. Therefore, the schools must be changed from "selecting-out" institutions to "guiding-in" institutions. In other words, they must develop programs to meet the needs of our young people--not force them into programs from which they cannot profit. Single answers and single programs develop neither quality nor quantity in the educational process. One program offered to many different kinds of students will either lower the quality of the program or fail to serve the students. Since we cannot design our students to fit our preconceived notions of programs--then it follows that we must design the program to fit the needs of the students.

Third, the schools are going to have to take on a responsibility for helping every youth to make the transition from school to the next step in life. The schools are going to have to assume this responsibility when the youngster walks in the door, not just say, "I'm sorry, Son, if you don't want to learn this, why don't you quit school and go to work, or join the Navy?" Neither is possible any longer. The advice which was pretty good 20 years ago is poor advice today. Today's modern Navy no more needs unskilled labor than does the automated civilian plant that supplies it with sophisticated electornic equipment. Therefore, the greatest responsibility of education is to provide pathways through childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood.

Fourth, our schools and colleges must become much more involved in continuing education--the retraining and upgrading of all kinds of people. In other words, if education really pays off--as our economists and business and labor leaders all now agree--then we must have educational opportunities available for anyone who needs additional education, not because the individual has a specific right to it but for the benefit of the Nation.

If it is assumed that educational institutions have a responsibility to send their products into the world of work adequately prepared--and I do--then it is obvious that the high schools and junior colleges are responsible for about 8 out of 10 students. I'm afraid we simply cannot say that those who are not educated and those who are isolated are locked out of our society for whatever reasons are expendable.

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We have over 20 percent of the young people in this country between the ages of 16 and 22 unemployed. Over 30 percent of the Negro youth in this country in this same age group are unemployed. At the same time, we have the greatest critical shortage of technical manpower we've ever had in this country because of the increasing impact of technology and ghe changing factors in the industry.

If limited resources should require priorities to be placed on education, we are aware, I am sure, of the compelling need for placing the priorities on the rural sector.

The responsibilities of our system of eduation for helping rural youth to understand the demands, complexities, and opportunities in a fast-changing society cannot be overemphasized.

But this task and that of revitalizing rural America is much too great to leave entirely to the schools. The creation of a healthy economic atmosphere in rural areas will have a significant effect on the quality of education young people receive.

Economic stability is essential to encourage the young to take root, determine their government and destinies, and build a vigorous community for their own and coming generations.

Seeking ways to provide job opportunities, upgrade rural living, and promote economic development will require the resourcefulness and cooperation of all thinking Americans, regardless of where they live. It will need the full partnership of business, industry, and government.

However, these many-sided efforts will be unsuccessful if we fail to seek cooperation from the local populations, including its youth.

Great opportunities exist in rural America. Therefore, we must focus on ways to help rural people to help themselves through greater use of existing resources and legislation and provide more legislation where it is necessary to establish the missing links to a rural Renaissance.

Agricultural production and its related industries are still the backbone of rural areas. The decision to develop rural education with emphasis on agricultural production would be a sound one. This is relevant and rewarding for people in rural areas, and it is essential during this period of great agricultural investment and advancement.

In 1966, of the nearly 1.7 million rural students in vocational-technical programs 60 percent were enrolled in agricultural education.

Dr. Grant Venn

President Johnson spoke emphatically about the role agriculture plays in our Nation and the world. He said--

> American agricultural production is the envy of the world. It is a powerful asset for peace. It provides means for showing the humanitarian intent of the United States. Finally, it is vital to our own national prosperity and well being. The training of young people for occupations in this essential industry places great responsibilities on our schools and other educational resources.

He went on to say that--

> Progress in every aspect of our Nation's life depends upon the abundant harvest of our farms. Food is a powerful asset for peace. People who are hungrey are weak allies of freedom. Men with empty stomachs do not reason together.
>
> Our ability to produce abundantly is no accident. It was brought about by educational programs to teach and inform farmers and prospective farmers, and to provide needed agricultural training for many of those who supply the farmer or who process and market his product.

Mr. Johnson concluded by saying--

> We must continue and strengthen educational programs to keep agricultural practice up to date, to get the full benefit of new findings and of new technology. In the face of greatly expanding population our survival is at stake.

Rural youngsters must be made aware of their "acres of diamonds"--that is, the job opportunities which exist that are specifically related to rural development: in forestry; in soil and water conservation; in tourist and community recreational enterprises; in community beautification; and in farming and the different businesses related to agriculture.

With the increased recognition of the interdependence of rural and urban life, parity of opportunity must become a fact of life in all rural communities.

Quality educational and public services, adequate electric power and telephone service, businesses and industries, facilities for job training, and more service institutions will stem the tide of migration to the cities. With these, rural Americans will meet the job hunger of its young people; and will provide the space and living room city dwellers so desperately seek.

Dr. Grant Venn

Young people can then stay in their communities, make a contribution in building it, and, in doing so, realize their own potentials for growth.

Last June, President Johnson addressed a group of young delegates to the fourth annual youth tour sponsored by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. He challenged them to work for a better world and "turn on the lights" in solving America's problems.

He told them --

> In your lifetime--the days ahead--you are going to have to completely rebuild this country. You are going to have to clean up the ghettos, tear out the slums, rebuild the cities and the factories.
>
> ...If you could take back home today one conviction I would hope it would be this: That your Nation's ability, your country's ability, to meet its challenges will depend largely on you...I want you to enter public service, to prepare yourselves for the school board, or as a local community leader, a county commissioner, a county official, the state legislature, a district attorney, a member of Congress. I hope that out there today is some person who will be occupying this platform some day.

Many of these youth will respond to educational opportunities that may lead to public service. But, if not this, we must make it possible for them to make decisions and to build a future on a career ladder with appropriate rewards.

Once we thought education was an expense. Now we know it is an investment.

Once we thought that full employment would be the natural result of an ever-expanding economy. Now we know that education--not the gross national product--is the real bridge between man and his work.

The problems of our children and young people begin in their homes and communities. And, by and large, what is done about them begins there too. But we must never forget that their problems stem from great social and economic forces that also plot the course of the Nation. These same forces will greatly affect the solutions of individual, family, and community problems.

One of the biggest jobs we have before us is to foster and conserve the potential of our youngsters, both rural and urban, whilte speeding head-long into the new world of supertechnology.

Dr. Grant Venn

We must tip the scales in the right direction. To do so, we will need the participation of the young--their enthusiasm, wonder, and sometimes their delightful illogic--to build a future we really want.

In a very real sense, they are the future--the only future--we will ever have.

R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 015 065 RC 002 056

RURAL YOUTH DELINQUENCY--SOME QUESTIONS AS WE LOOK AHEAD.

BY- DANIELS, LINCOLN

PUB DATE 23 OCT 67

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.24 4P.

DESCRIPTORS- BEHAVIOR, COMMUNITY SERVICES, DELINQUENCY, DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR, *DELINQUENCY PREVENTION, NEEDS, PLANNING, *RURAL YOUTH, *RURAL AREAS, SOCIAL INFLUENCES,

PROGRESSIVE URBANIZATION AND INDUSTRIALIZATION HAVE RESULTED IN HIGHER JUVENILE DELINQUENCY RATES, AND WHILE THE MIGRATION FROM RURAL TO URBAN AREAS SEEMS TO BE STABILIZING, DELINQUENCY HAS BEEN AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE MORE OF A PROBLEM IN URBAN THAN RURAL AREAS. IN MANY CASES RURAL AREAS ARE CONFRONTED WITH A LACK OF PROPER DETENTION FACILITIES AND PRACTICE UNSOUND PROBATION SERVICES LEADING TO EXCESSIVE OR UNNECESSARY COMMITMENTS TO JUVENILE INSTITUTIONS. TO ALLEVIATE DELINQUENCY ON A SOUND SYSTEMATIC BASIS, THE SCHOOLS SHOULD BE THE MAIN AXIS AROUND WHICH A COMMUNITY PROGRAM WOULD REVOLVE. THROUGH SUCH A COMMUNITY DELINQUENCY PROGRAM, RURAL YOUTH WOULD BE AFFORDED EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TO BENEFIT FROM PROFESSIONAL SERVICES WHICH ARE NOT CURRENTLY AVAILABLE TO MANY OF THEM. THIS SPEECH WAS PRESENTED AT THE NATIONAL OUTLOOK CONFERENCE ON RURAL YOUTH, OCTOBER 23-26, 1967, WASHINGTON, D. C., SPONSORED JOINTLY BY THE U. S. DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE, HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE, INTERIOR, AND LABOR, OEO, AND THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON YOUTH OPPORTUNITY. (ES)

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ED015065

Special Session on Quality of Living for Rural Youth

Speech presented at
NATIONAL OUTLOOK CONFERENCE
ON RURAL YOUTH
October 23-26, 1967
Washington, D. C.

RECEIVED
DEC 18 1967
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Rural Youth Delinquency - Some Questions As We Look Ahead

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It is clear from research findings that progressive urbanization and industrialization result in higher juvenile delinquency rates. Obviously, traditional social controls over individual behavior are less effective in and around the big city than in truly rural areas. City life seems to undermine the efficacy of social controls by the family (including relatives) and a fairly homogeneous group of neighbors which can be more effective controls in the distinctly rural community. Institutional controls, such as those exercised by the church, also seem to be less effective in the city. Thus, the rural setting itself is an important favorable factor in considering the problem of juvenile delinquency among rural youth.

Essentially, rural areas are those where people are living outside of the 219 standard metropolitan areas where two-thirds of our population now lives. These metropolitan areas have grown more than 60 percent faster than the rest of the country since 1960 (U.S. Census Bureau Population Report). However, the trend towards greater rural-metropolitan imbalance shows signs of abating. From 1960-65 there was a marked slowing down from the 1950-60 period when the metropolitan population grew nearly five times the rate for nonmetropolitan areas. Nevertheless, by 1980, 75 percent of our population will live in metropolitan areas. (As noted by John W. Gardner, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, in hearings on the Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Act of 1967, before the General Subcommittee on Education of the Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives.) Certainly, this has implications for future planning to prevent and control juvenile delinquency.

While delinquency will continue to be more of an urban than a rural problem because of the higher volume and rates in urban areas, it will not disappear from the rural countryside. We know that rural areas have fewer resources for delinquency prevention, control, and treatment than metropolitan areas. Therefore, as we look ahead and see the scarcity of resources in rural areas to deal with delinquency the question must be asked, "Is it feasible to expand these resources? And if so, where should we begin? What should be the main thrust--towards the home, school, or the community?"

Looking ahead, I have a strong conviction that if we are to improve delinquency prevention productivity, this must occur primarily in the schools at the primary grade level. For systematic sustained application of prevention services and programs on a substantial scale, it seems to me,

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the schools should be the main axis around which a community delinquency prevention program revolves. School is where the children are, and where we can get at them most efficiently. It is often the only place where arrangements can be made to work out the serious problems which some children have. This is especially so in rural areas where pertinent community services are scarce. It is widely recognized that children bring their problems to school with them. Virtually, every youngster admits the importance of school to his future, and very few adrift in the streets really want to be out of school. However, too many children find the classroom a boring, dull, and frustrating experience.

Last year, Secretary Gardner asked the Russell Sage Foundation to prepare a summary of delinquency prevention and control experience to help his Department with its planning. A number of outstanding practitioners and researchers in the field were asked for their thinking on future program directions. The resulting booklet had this to say about the schools:

"Even though the behavior problems that appear in school usually reflect inadequacies in family and community background, and therefore may not be in a clear sense created by the school itself, the school may still be the most efficient organization through which to work. Through the school system, it may be possible to bring about changes in life conditions and opportunities of large numbers of youth more effectively than through individual families."*

The key question in this regard as we look ahead is" Will schools become involved in delinquency prevention? Will schools be willing and able to develop their potentials for delinquency prevention in rural areas?

Deficiency of Detention Facilities and Probation Services in Rural Areas

Two of the most glaring deficiencies of pertinent resources for rural youth already delinquent are proper detention facilities and sound probation services.

Between one-third and one-half of all counties in the country are without probation services and this leads to excessive or unnecessary commitments to juvenile institutions because the juvenile judge lacks alternatives to commitment.

In 1955, one State reported that in large urban areas 5.6 percent of children referred to court were committed to public training schools while in rural areas, 15.9 percent of children referred to court were committed. Offense or diagnostic differentials might account for some of this urban-rural disproportion in commitments, but the stronger tendency of judges in rural areas to commit to State juvenile institutions is fairly clear.

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*Wheeler and Cottrell: Juvenile Delinquency: Its Prevention and Control. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1966, p. 17.

The pattern of these differentials has practical implications for treatment. While it may not be true that all rural boys are novices, and that all urban boys are well-versed in delinquency, the differences found between the two groups indicate that diversification of incarceration and treatment is called for. When a naive country boy is incarcerated with what are likely to be more sophisticated city bred delinquents the experience is not likely to be a constructive one in his personal development.

Conclusion

I have not touched upon certain facets of the rural delinquency problem such as probable differing standards of law enforcement between rural and urban areas and uneven or under-reporting of court cases (particularly informal) which seems characteristic of rural courts.

Our knowledge of the genesis, nature, and extent of delinquency in rural areas has wide gaps because pertinent research is scarce and juvenile court statistics incomplete. We know, however, that the basic needs of boys and girls are essentially the same whether they live in the country, suburb, or city. We know that poverty, neglect, and lack ofopportunity for wholesome activities take their toll in maladjusted personalities and juvenile delinquency in rural districts as well as in urban.

All youth need a sense of belonging and usefulness wherever they live. The degree of concern for the well-being of its young people, which each rural community demonstrates so that youth have this sense, seems to be a key factor in delinquency prevention; in keeping individual boys and girls from lapsing into delinquency.

The unavailability of court related services in many counties throughout the country for children in trouble leads to harmful detention in jails and commitment to institutions of many children who should remain in the community.

Some progress in giving the rural delinquent equal opportunities to benefit from sound professional services seems to have been made in a few States. Rural communities can use professional help to guide them in defining the needs and problems of children and youth. A simple survey in which local citizens gather and organize pertinent facts about the causes, nature, and extent of the local delinquency problem can be an effective generator of community action. Juvenile delinquency is essentially a local problem, and the community must carry the major responsibility for prevention and control.

The concept of urban and rural areas as separate and distinct entities vis-a-vis juvenile delinquency seems to be of diminishing usefulness. As metropolitan areas expand and multiply, adjacent rural areas gradually lose their distinct flavor and character by being drawn into the metropolitan sphere of influence. This process tends to make the rural-urban dichotomy increasingly difficult to discern and apply in developing programs and services related to juvenile delinquency.

Lincoln Daniels

Our population is about to reach 200 million. If this number were spread over the entire country evenly, each 56 persons would have a square mile of living space. As long as jobs continue to cluster in urban areas, little spreading out of people to live in more open country is likely to occur. However, as crowding and congestion in metropolitan areas worsen, creative changes might begin to emerge which would hold hope for those who prefer rural living. One possibility is the development and operation of high speed commuter trains which could feed people into the big cities fast and economically from as far out as 100 miles. Would not many people prefer to live and raise their families in open country if they could be whisked to city jobs in 30 minutes?

Another possibility is the planned dispersal of factories and plants far out along arterial highways leading into the city like spokes of a wheel such as has been done in Sweden around Stockholm. With pockets of jobs distributed over the comparative open country within the spheres of influence of major cities more people who want to can enjoy the benefits of the rural living.

In looking ahead, Herman Kahn and Anthony Weiner in their book, "The Year 2000," estimate that 44 percent of projected population for that year of 318 million will live in three megalopoles with 25 percent in the stretch between Boston and Washington which they call "Boswash." If this projection proves reliable, then overall juvenile delinquency is likely to increase because we know that this is one of the penalties of progressive urbanization. Thus, even though resources of money and professional services to control delinquency are harder to come by in rural areas, it appears that the problem will be more manageable there in terms of its visibility and numbers.